

Abstract 385

TITLE: Improving Adjustment Among Parents With AIDS and Their Adolescents

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BACKGROUND/OBJECTIVES: Social, behavioral, and mental health symptoms are expected among adolescents of parents with AIDS (PWAs). The efficacy of a 2module intervention to enhance adjustment of parents and their teens was evaluated over 2 years.

METHODS: A series of 307 PWAs and their 498 teens were randomly assigned to either: 1) standard care, or 2) an intensive intervention over 2 modules (Taking Care of Myself and Parenting while Ill) of 8 sessions each. Only parents attended module 1; youth and PWAs attended Module 2. More than 79% of PWAs assigned to the intervention attended the groups; more than 90% were followed over 24 months; 75% were reassessed 5 or more times.

RESULTS: Most PWAs were mothers (81%); 45% were Latino and 34% African-American. Youth were better adjusted than anticipated based on normative data of sameethnic, same-age peers. There were initially low levels of problem behaviors: substance use, sexual behaviors, emotional distress, school problems, and contact with the criminal justice system. Over time, those receiving standard care reported significant increases in these same problem behaviors. In contrast, the intervention group appeared to maintain lower rates of problem behaviors and emotional distress. Three patterns of youth's adjustment over 2 years were found: those whose adjustment was consistently positive, those with increased problems over time, and those with severe and persistent problems.

CONCLUSION: The intervention appears to be useful in sustaining positive adjustment. The importance of initiating interventions prior to parental death and continuing such intervention post-death is discussed.

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